Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Corporate Services
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Audit of Information Management - Records

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Executive Summary

Background

Records Management governs the control, maintenance, access, protection, preservation and disposition of records regardless of the media in which they are contained. It encompasses the policies, systems, procedures, operations, space, equipment and personnel required to administer the records. Good records management is important to ensure that information is readily available when needed. It also ensures that records of archival or historical value are preserved and records which are not longer of use are destroyed.

Government-wide, the Treasury Board's Management of Government Information Holdings (MGIH) policy, first issued in 1989 and revised in 1994, the National Archives of Canada Act, and Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) legislation are the key authorities. In the Department of Indian Affairs and Nothern Development (DIAND), the Departmental Directive 5.21, dated August 1989, the Departmental E-mail policy issued in September 1996, the classified waste directive, and the security of information disposition directive govern the records management field. All documentation received or generated by departmental personnel as part of their work is considered a record and as such shall be controlled and maintained as part of the departmental Records Management Program.

The responsibility for the records management function in the department is assigned to the Director General of the Information Management Branch (IMB) and, within IMB, to the Director of Corporate Information Management Division. At headquarters, the records management function is organized into two groups National Systems and Special Projects group and the Records and Mail Services group. The responsibility for the Records Management Program in the regions belongs to Regional Directors General.

Scope, Objectives and Methodology

The scope of this audit included the management framework, the adequacy of the work processes and practices, and their compliance with departmental and governmental policies. It also covered the human resources dimension of the Records Management Program, particularly in Records Offices, including staffing, classification, organization and other issues. A review of the financial resources, space, systems, procedures, and informatics was also part of the audit. The audit was performed at headquarters and in the Ontario and Manitoba Regional Offices and the Brantford District Office, in the Ontario Region.

The main objectives of the audit were to verify whether the records management function was carried out economically, efficiently and effectively in compliance with applicable policies and legislation, and whether the operations of records offices at headquarters and in two regions were economic, efficient and effective.

The audit methodology included interviews and audit tests and procedures to assess the operations of records management within and outside Records Offices. Audit criteria and preliminary audit results were discussed with responsible managers. The auditors received very good cooperation from managers and staff contacted, and had access to all the information requested.

General Assessment

There has been an overall decline in the departmental capability to manage its records over the last few years. Good records management in the department is currently impeded by a number of weaknesses. In particular, the management framework does not adequately define roles and responsibilities. Central records is not in a position to play the expected role of a leader in the area of records management, mainly because it does not always have the experienced and qualified staff needed nor some essential working tools. In addition, partly as a result of these weaknesses, many departmental employees, notably at headquarters, are not aware of their role in managing their records and, in many cases, good practices are not followed.

The corporate records management framework in place is not conducive to the economic, effective and efficient management of departmental records. The authority for records management, as documented in the departmental directive, is outdated. A clear accountability structure is no longer in place and, as a result, roles and responsibilities are not well understood. In the absence of these elements, and of adequate planning, the needs of records users are not being met and records may not be available when needed. In addition, records management is not perceived as important for many managers and staff, with the result that good record keeping practices are not always followed, and records are not managed as they should be.

There are important weaknesses in the operations of records offices at headquarters and in regions. There is a shortage of experienced and qualified records management staff to cope with fundamental records activities. In addition, the resources allocated to managing departmental records are not always used productively due to the absence of adequate guidance and procedures. As a result, the records management program at headquarters has difficulties providing consistent leadership and direction to programs and regions. There are also weaknesses in the departmental classification system. The system is overly complex and does not incorporate all records. Records managed by dedicated Records Offices are not always organized and classified to facilitate their efficient retrieval and access by users. Records are not always disposed of in accordance with the disposition schedule.

Records Offices have not taken full advantage of the technology available that facilitates access and retrieval of records. Despite efforts in that direction, the department as a whole still has to come to grips with the management of records in electronic format, notably E-mail messages.

Headquarters staff and, to a lesser extent, regional staff are not always aware of their records management responsibilities, leading to inappropriate records keeping practices, risking the preservation of the corporate memory or unavailability of information when needed. The responsibility to meet the department's records management obligations rests with all employees, not just records management personnel. In general, employees are not well informed about their role in managing the records they create or receive as part of their work, and they do not know the protocol for managing them. Inadequate or limited functional direction has contributed to this lack of awareness. One of the consequences of this limited awareness, is the heterogeneity in records management practices. Some units use the central records services, but others, at times due to dissatisfaction with records management services, operate totally or partly outside the corporate structure without ensuring that proper records management practices are in place.

There are several reasons for the deficiencies noted by the audit. Some of these reasons, such as technological developments, are not controlled by managers and staff. However, other reasons, such as resource allocation or senior management support, are under departmental control. Actions are required to restore departmental capability with regard to records management, while taking into account developments in the field, availability of resources, and the changing role of the department. There is a dire need to update the management framework in order to establish clear accountability, responsibility and authority for records management throughout the department. There is also a need to ensure that the Records Offices have adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place, including a revised classification system. Employees should be made aware, and regularly reminded, of their roles and responsibilities with respect to records.

Since the last reorganization, strong leadership from new management has resulted in many actions to strengthen the records management function. Significant improvements are notable. However, more needs to be done to ensure economic, effective and efficient records management in the department.

Section 1 - Introduction

Authority

The audit of records management was undertaken pursuant to Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee (DAEC) approval of terms of reference (TOR) for an audit of information management in the fall of 1996. Subsequent to the approval of these TORs, the responsibility for the records management function was transferred from the Administrative Services Directorate to the Information Management Branch (IMB). This prompted the Director General of IMB to request the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) to make a separate audit of the records function.

Background

Records management is traditionally conceived as a cycle. This cycle begins with the creation or receipt of any official document. The second step is the classification, the process of analysing and determining the subject content of a document, selecting the subject category under which it should be filed, and assigning the appropriate file number. Classification is supported by a subject file classification system, which is a logical arrangement of subjects organized to reflect all programs and functions of a department. The purpose of the file classification system is to allow for the accurate and efficient retrieval of records. The third element, records storage and protection, comprises all activities related to the storage, protection and security measures for active, dormant and essential records. The fourth and last element, records retention scheduling and disposal, covers all processes related to the development of definite retention periods, denoting both the active and dormant life of a record, and their subsequent disposal. Records should be disposed of promptly and systematically, with particular attention given to the transfer of archival records to National Archives.

Government-wide, the Treasury Board's Management of Government Information Holdings (MGIH) policy, first issued in 1989 and revised in 1994, the National Archives of Canada Act, and Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) legislation are the key authorities. In the Department of Indian Affairs and Nothern Development (DIAND), the Departmental Directive 5.21, dated August 1989, the Departmental E-mail policy issued in September 1996, the classified waste directive, and the security of information disposition directive govern the records management field. For the departmental directive, records management "... includes the identification, classification and retrieval, storage and protection, receipt and transmission, retention, and disposal or preservation of the records. It also encompasses the policies, procedures, systems, operations, space, equipment and staff required to administer the records." The directive also defines a number of expected results.

These include: all departmental records are managed effectively and efficiently to meet departmental information needs; information is readily available to departmental officials; information and records requested under the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act are quickly retrieved; records are protected from unauthorized access, disclosure or alteration; records are neither destroyed nor removed from departmental control without the proper approval; and records designated by the National Archives as having archival or historical value are preserved.

Following the last Corporate Services reorganization, the primary responsibility for records management rests with the Information Management Branch, through the Corporate Information Management Directorate (CIMD), formerly Information Quality and Research. The CIMD is responsible to develop and disseminate policies, systems, procedures and guidelines on records management, develop operational process, train departmental personnel, dispense functional direction, and provide records management services to organizational components located at headquarters. To fulfil its mandate, the CIMD is divided in two areas. The National Systems and Special Projects is responsible for developing, disseminating and interpreting records policies, systems and procedures, providing functional direction to departmental employees, monitoring records operations through functional reviews, carrying out formal records management training, preparing and negotiating multi-year disposition plans, and managing residential schools records. The Records and Mail Services is responsible for the day to day operations of the main Records Office as well as two sub-Records Offices, the archival unit and the mail and messenger service.

In regions, the Regional Directors General are responsible for the implementation of the departmental records management program within their Regional and District Offices. This responsibility includes interpreting and disseminating central agency and departmental records management policy, coordinating records management processes and providing records management services directly to the regional users through the operation of Regional or District Records Offices. Records Offices are located in every Regional Office, and district offices in some regions, to serve the records management needs of the regional staff and meet the departmental requirements with regards to records.

Beyond these organizational structures, the responsibility to meet records management obligations rests with all departmental employees, as well as records management personnel. Every departmental official is responsible for ensuring that all official records that he or she receives or generates, whatever their format or support, are integrated into the departmental file classification system, and are classified, stored and protected, notably by forwarding them to the appropriate Records Office.

In recent years, the development of computer and communication technologies have radically changed the field of records management. Although the basic concepts remain the same, their concrete application has changed, sometimes drastically. For example, the use of computers to collect, exchange and store large quantities of program data or text, has given rise to new challenges in order to preserve and eventually dispose of that information in due course.

Scope

For the purposes of the audit, records management was viewed as a subset of the larger information management issue. The function of records management was examined in the context of the regulations and policies which rule its procedures at governmental and departmental levels.

The scope of the audit included the following elements:

- the records management program, including the management framework, the adequacy of the work processes and practices and the compliance with departmental and government-wide policies;
- the human resources dimension of the records management program, particularly in Records Offices, including staffing, classification, organization and other issues; and
- the financial and other resources dimension of the records program, including space, systems, procedures, informatics and other resources.

The work took place at headquarters in Hull, at the Ontario and Manitoba Regional Offices, and at the Brantford district office in the Ontario Region. At headquarters, the audit examined the central Records Office and the sub-offices, the Archival Unit, and the management direction. It did not include the management of residential school records. It also involved interviews with program managers and staff outside records management as well as a review of the records management practices in these programs. In regions, the audit focussed on the Records Office and the overall management of records in selected areas.

Audit Objectives

The objectives of the audit were to carry out an assessment of the records management situation within the department. The project audited departmental records from two perspectives: 1) as a corporate function to be managed; and 2) as a source of information to support departmental operations. The main objective of the audit was to verify whether the records management control framework in place ensured the economic, efficient and effective management of departmental records and compliance with applicable policies and legislation.

This main objective was supplemented by four specific objectives:

- to assess whether the records management function was carried out economically, efficiently and effectively at headquarters and in two regions (and one district);

- to assess whether the operations of the Records Offices at headquarters and in two regions (and one district) were carried out economically, efficiently and effectively (as entities dedicated to records management operations (e.g. systems, processes, procedures, etc.) and as organizational structures (staffing, space, etc.);

- to verify whether departmental records were managed in compliance with National Archives and other policy and legislative requirements regarding the management, retention and disposition of records and/or information holdings; and

- to identify potential solutions to problems and make recommendations to responsible managers.

Methodology

The preliminary survey work began in the spring of 1997 and ended in June 1997. This work was carried out completely by DAEB officials. The preliminary audit work involved a general review of the relevant policies and procedures in place for the management of records as well as other related records management documentation. Under DAEB's management, the audit fieldwork was conducted by a team of auditors from the firm of *Virtus Consulting Inc.* in partnership with *CONDAR Consulting Inc.*, a firm specialized in records management. The audit fieldwork began in August 1997 and was completed in December 1997.

Audit criteria were developed and discussed with the responsible managers. Audit programs and interview guides were developed to collect the relevant information. The fieldwork involved interviews with departmental managers and staff in the CIMD, including the Main Records Offices and Sub Records Offices. Interviews were also held with program managers and their support staff with records responsibilities. A number of audit tests were undertaken to confirm the operations of records systems and procedures. Tests performed included examinations of: the completeness and accuracy of the file classifications system, accuracy of the classification of documents, the procedures for controlling the location of records, and completeness and accuracy of retention and disposal schedules. Records of Audit Observations (RAOs) were prepared for and reviewed by headquarters and the Ontario and Manitoba Regional Offices and the Brantford, Ontario District Office.

The auditors received very good cooperation from all departmental managers and staff contacted, and had access to all the information requested.

Reporting Strategy

The audit procedures have resulted in the identification of a number of weaknesses or deficiencies requiring management attention. This report presents the consolidated findings of these audit procedures, including the RAOs. An effort has been made to identify the causes of the deficiencies noted in order to make more useful recommendations and facilitate the identification of corrective actions.

In addition to this introductory section, the report is divided in five sections. Each section deals with a key audit finding and the roles of a separate accountability centre. The first section deals with the overall records management framework. The second and third sections deal with headquarters issues, in CIMD and outside it. The fourth and fifth sections deal with regional and district issues, within and outside the records management units.

Section 2 - Findings and Recommendations

Corporate Records Management Framework

Finding #1: The corporate records management framework is not conducive to the effective and efficient management of departmental records.

The audit assessed whether accountability, responsibility and authority for the management of departmental records were clearly assigned across the department. A strong management framework was expected to coordinate the actions of everyone involved in the management of departmental records. The framework should define the applicable policies as well as the roles and responsibilities, and should ensure the participation of all the departmental employees concerned. For that purpose, clear records policies, guidelines and procedures should exist to provide guidance to employees on how to manage the records in their care.

The audit found significant weaknesses in the overall management framework. The authority for records management, documented in the departmental directive 5.21, is outdated. It has been overtaken by events affecting the way the department does business, and does not reflect DIAND organizational changes. The audit also found that the records management policy framework is incomplete because it is silent about the management of electronic records, and does not include the current principles and concepts of the Treasury Board information management policies (i.e., managing information holdings throughout their life cycle, regardless of the form or medium in which the information is held).

The audit also found that a clear accountability structure has generally not been established. The records management roles and responsibilities at headquarter are not well understood, managers and staff were not fully aware of their own roles and responsibilities. Many program branches personnel believed that the authority to make decisions in managing their files rest only with them, while other officials were unaware of the definition of a record and the rules in managing records. Without a clear structure, the department is not in a position to manage records effectively and faces frequent difficulties in retrieving the information located in records.

The management framework in place does not adequately establish a planning element for the records management function. Planning for records should take into account how records are used, and by whom, and what the access requirements are. The absence of planning for the function has contributed to the needs of users of records not being met. The audit also noted that few directives and procedures existed beyond the policy. For those that do exist, such as the records management directives, the e-mail policy and guidelines, classified waste directive, the security of information disposition directive, and the subject file classification operating procedures, the audit found that the degree of awareness of these directives and procedures among the staff interviewed was generally low. This contributes to the continuation of poor records management practices in many working units across the department.

The ramifications for the deficiencies noted above in the management framework are numerous. Records and their management are not perceived as important for many managers and staff, with the result that good record keeping practices are not always followed, and records are not managed as they should be. For example, in many areas of the department branches maintain their own records outside of the records management system. Some have created their own file systems and have ignored related file indexing and file control operations. Furthermore, managing records is often perceived to be the unique responsibility of Records Offices. In other words, managing records is seen more as a paperwork exercise than as a concerted effort to preserve the information located in these records and files in order to be able to retrieve it when needed. The results are also that information holdings are incomplete, leaving gaps in the corporate memory and preventing departmental employees from quickly locating all relevant records for decision making and scheduling them for retention and disposal. Ultimately, if the records management function is not adapted to the changing needs and organization of the department, individual and organizational productivity will be impaired. Not all of the department's records management objectives as identified in its policy statement have been met because the management framework has not established all employees clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities with respect to records management.

There are several reasons for the deficiencies noted by the audit. Some reasons are more or less controlled by the department or the managers and staff. The development of the technologies to produce, store and distribute information and changes in the way the department does business with its partners are examples. It has also been difficult for the department as well as for other federal government departments and agencies to follow evolving information management policies and principles enunciated in the TB Management of Government Information Holdings (MGIH) policy because of a lack of direction and leadership from the policy centre. As a case in point, one of the conclusions of 1996 Review of the MGIH policy conducted by the TB Evaluation, Audit and Review Group relates to the little implementation guidance and willingness to provide the necessary resources on the part of the policy centre.

Other reasons, however, are under the control of departmental management. The former Departmental Records Information Management Section, for example, has suffered from years of neglect, and from a lack of strong senior management support. There has been a general lack of direction from records management. In addition, over the years, the number of human resources available for records management activities have declined, and the skills available among these resources were not always those required to face the rapid changes occurring in the field of records management and in the department in general.

Recommendations

1. The Director General of the Information Management Branch should update the record management framework, in light of the development in the field of records management and of the changing role of the department and, in cooperation with Regional Directors General, ensure the implementation of this framework across the department.

2. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that adequate staff are assigned to records management, and that they have the required skills to support the updated management framework.

Finding #2: **There are important weaknesses in the operations of Headquarters Records Office.**

The audit assessed the operations of headquarters central records. In DIAND, it is the responsibility of the headquarters main Records Office to provide functional direction and review with regard to the management of records throughout the department and to update headquarters Records Office and Sub-Records Offices. The audit expected, as for any records management program, that central records would operate effectively, would set the direction for all records related issues and be regarded as the technical authority that provides leadership and guidance throughout the organization.

The audit found significant weaknesses in the operation of central records at headquarters. The most important weakness relates to the structure and operation of the main Records Office. The absence of a strong centre for records management has caused many of the headquarters, and departmental, records management problems, notably with regard to the file classification system and the management of records holdings. As a result, the records management program is not operating as a well managed function with the utilization of good records practices across the department, this has created gaps in departmental records holdings. In addition, records management in general suffers from credibility problems and many programs managers are reluctant to trust the Records Office with their records.

Operations of the Records Offices

To accomplish its roles and fulfil its responsibilities, the Records Offices need staff with the required skills and knowledge, and proper training and who have access to work tools and procedures. The audit found weaknesses in these three aspects.

The audit noted a shortage of experienced and qualified records management staff at headquarters to cope with fundamental records activities. At the time of the audit, 22 out of 28 indeterminate positions in the Records Offices were occupied by employees for whom this was not their substantive position. In fact, the term employees outnumbered the indeterminate ones. This shortage of knowledge and skills has occurred over time and has resulted from organizational changes, reduction of resources and staffing actions. The view that there is a shortage of experienced staff was also shared by some users of Records Office services.

Records staff can handle routine tasks, but there is more limited capacity when it comes to providing an "advisory" type of service dealing with records issues at a higher level. There are very few records employees who have the level of knowledge and skill required to adequately perform this task. Furthermore, some Records Office classifiers performing the same duties are not classified at the same level. Classification can also be problematic when performed by untrained or inexperienced staff. There are some program areas for which the classification system is a problem and with limited availability to skilled records management resources, program managers have been left to manage their records as best they can with little technical support.

In addition to the staffing situation, the audit noted that there are few formal procedures for planning, controlling and monitoring the work of Records Offices. Annual plans, goals and objectives for the records management function do not exist. The results of the records management function's activities are not measured and reported on. Records staff do not consistently keep statistics for records activities. However, plans for clearing the backlog of records and dealing with work in arrear have been established. In addition, records management is in the process of redesigning its performance measurement system to assess and report on the results of its activities.

There are few written procedures about many other key aspects of records keeping such as classifying and indexing, filing operations, file control and records disposition. Informal procedures do exist, however, within some sections of the Records Offices. For instance, the Indian and Inuit Affairs Records Office Section does not accept unorganized records from operational programs unless the records are dated within the last six months. Records management has also issued procedures about the subject file classification system as well as a few others aspects.

Partly as a result of inadequate procedures, the physical maintenance of records, the shelving and the office layout of the Records Offices are not conducive to efficient records operations. At the time of the audit, the main office was untidy and did not project a professional appearance. Many boxes, files, binders, and loose papers were lying about unnecessarily. Some of these situations, however, are being corrected.

The situation described above has had many consequences. For instance, the resources allocated to managing departmental records are not used productively and backlog can build up. Limited functional guidance and training is provided to departmental employees. Staff outside of the Records Offices who have records management responsibilities are not always in a position to perform their records task in accordance with departmental record keeping practices. Little information is made available to departmental staff in general, and to new employees in particular, on departmental records management policies and practices. Ultimately, the confidence on the capability of Records Offices to carry their duties is being questioned.

In our interviews, a number of program managers said that they view the Records Offices as a depository of inactive records that do not fully carry out their functions. Overall, the situation contributes to gaps in the "corporate memory", as well as increasing the risk of not being able to find information for accountability purpose or in support of decision-making.

Recommendation

3. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that the Records Offices have adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.

Departmental File Classification

A complete and convenient centrally-managed subject file classification system was expected. Such a system is essential to assist records classification and ensure that, among other things, records are available and accessible to fulfil accountability requirements, support decision-making and to respond to access to information requests.

The audit found weaknesses in the current departmental file classification system. Departmental policy directs that a centrally-managed subject file classification system supported by appropriate indexes is established and maintained. Under that policy, all documentation received or generated by departmental personnel is considered a record and, as such, must be controlled and maintained as part of the departmental records classification system. The Central Records is responsible for the departmental file classification system. The current system, developed and implemented in the 1970s, is the type that was recommended at the time and still in use and considered the best system today in the federal government. The principles of the system are sound and its structure is flexible enough to permit expansion and inclusion of new subject categories, and the elimination or modification of program areas that have been abolished or restructured.

The audit found that the file classification system does not incorporate all of DIAND's records holdings. The records not incorporated are paper-based documents related to certain programs or activities carried out at headquarters, and many of the electronic records. For example, many records related to the Northern Oil and Gas Directorate in the Northern Affairs program, the offices of the Departmental Secretariat and Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) Coordinator, and the Financial Policies, Systems and Accounting Directorate in Finance Branch are not accounted for.

For the electronic records, little has been done to enable linking the subject matter of these records to the file classification system. Until systems are in place to automatically link electronic data to other corporate records holdings, the department needs to describe these records in the centrally-managed subject file classification system or in an alternative system

which reflects their proper organization. At this time, however, the CIMD is participating, with other departments and the National Archives, in different federal working groups on this and related subjects.

For the classification system to work effectively, records management should analyse the needs of the users to ensure that the system works for all of them. People interviewed often attributed the weaknesses in the file classification system to the fact that the system does not meet their needs. Many find the system cumbersome. It contains too many secondary and primary file numbers, and some of the two series overlap. There would be a need to regroup some subjects and eliminate others. In some cases, managers and staff have created their own filing systems. Our interviews with records management staff confirmed users' views and records staff acknowledge that they have been reactive rather than proactive in identifying some of the users' needs. Some program managers would like Central Records to become more involved with their program operations but have not taken further action.

The audit noted, however, one instance where records management has provided assistance to a program in analysing records needs and in setting up records systems to the satisfaction of the people involved. Also, the corporate file classification system permits the easy identification and separation of policy from routine material. In addition, regular updates of the file classification are issued to selected users, such as regions, National Archives and some program branches. However, in the absence of a classification system that contains a comprehensive set of records, the department is not in a position to present in "Info-Source", a requirement under ATIP, a complete listing of its records.

Recommendation

4. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that the records classification system is revised, in consultation with regions, with a view to ensure that it contains all records, regardless of their format, and to simplify it when feasible.

Management of Records Holdings

The audit assessed the management of the records sent to the Records Offices and under their direct control. It expected that these records would be correctly classified, put away regularly, adequately stored and protected, and readily accessible by users.

The audit found that departmental records managed by central records are not always organized and classified to facilitate efficient retrieval and access by users. Program managers interviewed mentioned many instances of documents which were incorrectly classified and could not be retrieved. Often times, these documents are placed in general files instead of specific files. This complicates their eventual retrieval. A test carried out as part of the audit confirmed that perception. Five out of twelve documents selected in the main Records Office at headquarters

could not be retrieved by using the classification system and the available finding aids. The audit noted that there is little review of the classification work. Documents which cannot be retrieved because they have been incorrectly classified, or cannot be accessed through finding aids, may have serious ramifications for the department. Lost documents put the corporate memory at risk.

Records received are generally put away regularly. However, an 8-year backlog of records has built up over the last few years, most of it as a result of program branches staff retaining official records and returning large quantities of unorganized files to the Records Offices from time to time or when they leave their positions. As indicated above, a plan has been establish to deal with this situation.

The audit noted that the Records Offices are using many different manual indexes to support the file classification system. These indexes have not all been automated nor are they complete and up-to-date. Indexes are key to finding information and provide the Records Offices memory for its staff. Also, records are not adequately controlled when they are charged out to users as the Main Records Offices do not recall files which have been charged out for long periods of time. The control over charged out files is further weaken by the fact that users do not use the records office bring forward system which is designed to ensure that records are kept-up-date and that other users have access to charged out records. An audit test performed on charged out files showed that four of the five files tested could not be retrieved.

The Recorded Information Management System (RIMS) has been implemented as the department's automated records management system. This automated system has been successfully implemented in other departments and agencies and has proven an effective tool in support of records management operations. The audit found, however, that DIAND has not taken full advantage of this technology to support its records management function. RIMS has not been adequately implemented and is still not used to its full extent. Its implementation did not follow the normal departmental practices for such a system, and some of the people involved in its implementation did not have sufficient knowledge of informatics. There are no written procedures for many data entries, and people have received little training in how to operate and use the system. As a result, data problems have accumulated. For example, thousand of key word entries in RIMS were lost because of a system failure. Many of the system's features, such as recording the loan of files, the transfers between offices, files recall, information about file disposal, and the production of various lists and indices are not fully implemented. It was also noted that users of RIMS and all Records Offices employees do not have access to the system.

The storage and protection of active records is also a concern at headquarters. Active records are defined as those that support operational needs and accountability requirements. The audit noted that headquarters Records Offices maintain dormant or inactive records which should be moved to interim dormant storage instead of using prime office space. The audit estimated that up to a third of the total records holdings in these offices are dormant or inactive and should, therefore, be located elsewhere. With respect to protection, when records are stored in the Records Offices, and in the selected operational branches we visited, they are adequately protected from unauthorized access, disclosure, removal, and destruction. This is not the case, however, for

records outside organized storage. There are also weaknesses with regard to essential records. These records contain information that would be required in the event of fire or other disaster. The identification of these records needs to be done in cooperation with the program officials and those responsible for emergency planning and be updated regularly. Some of these records may need to be stored off-site. The audit found that essential records have not been completely identified. The department had completed a study and started to determine what information it would need in the event of a fire or disaster, but did not terminate the process.

Recommendation

5. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records.

Records Disposition

The purpose of a records disposition program is to control the accumulation of records and to ensure the economical storage of dormant records, the disposal of useless records, and the identification and preservation of archival records. The audit expected a scheduling of records for retention and disposal that reflects the operational, fiscal and legal values of records and ensures the preservation of records with permanent value. It also expected a disposition process that allows for the systematic transfer of records of permanent value to the National Archives and the destruction of records which have ceased to be of value to DIAND.

The audit found that despite progress that central Records has made concerning the multi-year disposition project, the scheduling and disposition of records is incomplete. Retention periods have not been assigned to all records including those in electronic medium. For example, the capital management, social development, natural resources and environment records have not been scheduled for disposal at headquarters. In addition, some retention periods that have been assigned do not reflect the information's operational, fiscal and legal values. For instance, the 30-year retention period concerning estates, trust accounts, Indian registrations, and Indian claims is perceived to be too short. However, as part of headquarters records management ongoing records disposition project, DIAND is negotiating new authorities with the National Archives which will encompass this latter issue.

The audit noted that a lack of cooperation from program branch officials, and a poor understanding of the benefits of the disposition program, makes it very difficult for the headquarters Archival Unit to carry out its records disposition role. The archival unit points out that some program officials do not promptly respond to its requests to review files which have become eligible for disposal. It was also found that many inactive housekeeping files occupy prime office space at headquarters records offices because staff do not have time to identify them for disposal in accordance with the Government Records Disposal Schedules. For example, one program still has files dating back to 1947.

Program branches need to understand the benefits in systematically scheduling departmental records for disposition. Records management staff cannot proceed alone as the records disposition activity is an undertaking requiring the participation of all departmental managers and staff. Records management requires the cooperation of all program branches and the support of senior management in order to carry on its responsibilities otherwise, the systematic disposition of records will be a futile exercise resulting in higher costs for managing records.

The department needs to give this activity a higher priority. Currently, there are insufficient records management resources dedicated to this activity. Unless the appropriate measures are taken, DIAND will not be complying with the National Archives of Canada Act and the government records disposition practices.

Recommendation

6. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should revise the retention period assigned to some records and, in cooperation with programs, ensure the prompt disposal of records that are beyond their retention period.

Awareness of Records Responsibility and Good Practices

Finding #3: **Headquarters staff are not always aware of their records management responsibilities, leading to inappropriate records keeping practices, risking the preservation of the corporate memory or unavailability of information when needed.**

The previous sections discussed the importance of a good corporate management framework, a strong records office and good records management practices. This section deals with the essential contribution, and roles and responsibilities, of departmental employees at headquarters in ensuring the good management of records.

The audit expected that the employees involved in the creation and utilization of records would be aware of their responsibilities and would fulfil them adequately. Also, in order to fully implement the corporate records management framework, to ensure the completeness of existing departmental records, and the adequate management of these records, the audit expected that sectors and program branches would have established a good level of cooperation and coordination with the main Records Office and implemented suitable records management practices.

Employee Awareness of Records and Responsibilities

It is generally agreed that user awareness is an important tool in achieving effective records management in an organization. The audit found that awareness among employees of what is a "record" is low. More standard forms of "records" are generally known understood, such as

correspondence, official documents, but new forms of records, such as electronic documents or e-mail messages, are less well understood. Moreover, many employees at headquarters are not aware of their responsibilities with respect to records. They are not well informed about their role in managing the records they create or receive as part of their work and they do not know the protocol for managing records. Some who were aware of it, noted that this protocol may need to be more user-friendly. During interviews with managers and staff, however, the audit noted that most of them are aware of the importance of records. Many are also aware that some of their practices in managing records might be questionable, in that they do not ensure future access and adequate protection to records. At best, the contribution of employees in the overall management of records is variable.

Many factors contributed to this situation. INAC no longer provides user awareness sessions, and little information is communicated through other means. Staff are seldom reminded of the definition of a record, from a departmental or government perspective. For example, the orientation manual for new employees does not contain any reference to records management as an employee responsibility or of the organizational structure responsible for records in the department. In addition, there is a lack of attention paid to records by many departmental managers and a perception that records management is not important or is a lower priority on management's agenda. Also, over the years staff reductions have eliminated or reduced the number of positions dealing with records and may have contributed to the decrease in the awareness of records.

Another factor contributing to a lower level of awareness is the introduction of the fax, electronic mail and the Internet, and the resulting changes in the exchange of information. These changes have had impact on the way the department does business internally and with its partners. In general, they have tended to accelerate the flow of information. Their impact on records management have been recognized, but the adjustments required to records management practices have not all been made yet. For example, since e-mail was first introduced, its use has increased many times over. The department is now at a point where a significant portion of its business is conducted through e-mail messages. Their incorporation into the corporate record holdings is critical to preserve the corporate memory and to ensure the availability of information for the reconstruction of policy.

In 1996, the department issued e-mail policy and directives. The policy recognizes the importance of this new form of information holdings and the need to preserve it for legal, informational and historical purposes and to apply appropriate practices to store and make this information available to and understandable by users. The policy acknowledges that an increasing portion of official information is located in personal computers throughout the department and that unless it is extracted from there, there is a risk that it could be lost. The directives provide employees with responsibility guidelines as well as definitions for discerning between transitory and corporate information and establishes guidelines for information storage and destruction. In spite of these directives, we noted in our interviews that the degree of awareness of the policy varied and that most departmental employees are not forwarding e-mail messages to the Records Offices for incorporation into records nor are they printing copies for

the official files they retain. Many people mentioned that the number of messages make it difficult to keep tract of them and to ensure that a paper copy gets filed. Some people resented the fact that electronic information has to be transferred to paper for storage purpose.

The lack of awareness among employees has had a number of impacts. For instance, it is more difficult to maintain an accurate and up-to-date file classification system when there is little cooperation between programs and records specialists. Program staff do not systematically keep the main records office informed of the records created or received as part of their work. As we have seen in the previous section, this has contributed to the fact that the file classification system is not complete. The management of records and, ultimately, the preservation of the corporate memory also become more difficult. Unless corrective action is taken, departmental employees will continue to perceive records management as less important than their other responsibilities and will handle records accordingly.

Recommendation

7. The Director General of the Information Management Branch should assess the degree of records management awareness among employees and implement mechanisms to increase awareness of critical aspects of records management or of those that are the least understood.

Records Management Practices

There exists different structures to manage departmental records. At one extreme, all records are physically located in one central records office. At the other extreme, records are physically decentralized in sub-records offices close to branches, or decentralized directly to program branches. The audit expected that, regardless of the structure in place, employees would contribute to the management of their records, and would ensure that records are accounted for in the corporate file classification system and managed according to departmental record-keeping practices, including their proper storage, protection and eventual disposition.

The audit found that some employees contribute to the management of their records while others attach little importance to it. It was also found that the structure in place to manage records, and the lead role of managers, has significant impacts in the way records are managed. Four different situations were noted.

There are program branches who, for the most part, use the services of the records office to maintain their records. In these cases, records are incorporated into the departmental file classification system and transferred to the main records office on a regular basis. When this system is well established, the audit noted that it can lead to the adequate management of records, although never avoiding totally some of the weaknesses discussed elsewhere in this report, such as those related to the electronic records. One program branch in particular was

satisfied with the relations it had recently established with the main records office to ensure the on-going management of its records. Another program branch was less satisfied due to a perception of an inadequate classification of its records.

There are other program areas, such as Lands and Trusts Services, who have chosen to retain custody of their records because of operational requirements. These records are maintained within the departmental file classification system and generally managed according to departmental record keeping practices and standards. In these cases, although records are managed decentrally, they are still incorporated into the department's file classification system, the corporate memory is preserved and the entire department has access to these records when needed.

Some program areas have chosen to retain custody of their own official records outside of the departmental records management system, with limited technical guidance from the records program. Groups which are maintaining their own records in this manner include the Departmental Secretariat, the Access to Information and Privacy Office, some programs in Policy and Strategic Direction, and the Northern Oil and Gas Directorate in the Natural Resources Environment Branch. There are many records from these groups which are not incorporated into the departmental classification system. For example, the Access to Information and Privacy Office uses its own classification system and is satisfied with it. In general, records maintained that way are often unknown to and difficult to access by users, especially from other program areas. In addition, the records management practices vary. There are poor records management practices such as inappropriate or non-existent finding aids in support of file classification systems. For example, in one instance, a program support clerk did not have available key word indexes for the quick retrieval of records. We also noted that the filing systems these groups are using did not permit the easy identification and separation of policy from the routine material causing difficulties later in applying retention and disposition schedules. Another example of what may happen when records are maintained outside of the departmental system is the case of the Socio-Economic and Programming Directorates. When they were re-structured, their records were moved to another building without the knowledge of Records Management. In many of these areas, there is little awareness of applicable departmental policies.

Lastly, there is the situation of many records which are retained in program areas throughout the department but which are not managed in accordance with any recommended records management practices. In other words, these records are, totally or partly, outside the corporate file classification system, and are not subject to management practices that are conducive to efficient and effective retrieval of information. For example, records may not be classified according to departmental standards. Many people tend to hold on to their documents for fear that they may be lost. They do not trust centralized records management. However, these records are not necessarily stored and protected according to their relative importance. Moreover, they are not always disposed of in accordance with applicable standards and schedules. For example, designated "cleaning days" have been interpreted as the time to get rid of old records and papers and transfer them to the main records office in a more or less organized and orderly form. The results of these "cleaning days" has been the transfer to records office of a

mix of "waste" and important documents. Although this practice is better than nothing, it creates a risk that original documents of archival importance may be destroyed or lost in a large collection of unorganized documents.

This situation is most likely the biggest cause of what record staff call the "dumping of records", which is the returning of large quantities of unorganized records and files to Records Offices. It also occurs in relocation and when employees leave their positions. This kind of practices is not conducive to workload planning at the main records office and to on-going protection of records holdings. It has contributed to the built up of the 8-year backlog in the main records office mentioned earlier. The dumping of records is not only creating significant backlogs of work on records management, but, in our view, is one of the biggest causes of information retrieval problems. We noted that dumping has been going on for many years at DIAND, based on findings of previous departmental records management audits and studies. These conditions present serious implications for the future retrieval of these records and the reconstruction of corporate memory. Dealing with the backlog and implementing the measures necessary to prevent future "dumping", will result in the on-going maintenance of records according to departmental practices and standards. This will be a long, tedious, time consuming, and expensive process. However, not dealing with this situation will seriously undermine the headquarters records management program.

One of the likely causes of the deficiencies noted above are the result of little functional direction to programs at headquarters combined with the provision of limited training to program areas and the absence of records management awareness on the part of program managers and their employees. Also, records management may not have adequately responded to the information needs of users nor have they established formal processes for providing users with guidance. The audit concluded that there is a need to provide program areas with technical records management information through means such as orientation sessions for new employees, briefing sessions, and periodic information guidelines. Another factor must also be acknowledged. The decisions to reduce the records management program's budget, along with the overall reduction of resources allocated to general administration throughout the department, may also have contributed to the deficiencies in the records management program at headquarters and to the lack of appropriate corrective actions.

A major step in achieving proper maintenance of all departmental records will have to be a change in the attitudes of many departmental employees towards records management. There is a need for programs to understand the ramification of "dumping" unorganized records on the records offices. Program managers and their employees, support staff in particular, need to learn departmental record keeping practices and how their records fit within the departmental records management scheme. Records Management will need to work closer with programs managers and their employees to provide direction and assistance in the interpretation of record keeping practices, systems and procedures as well as better defining program mangers' information needs.

Recommendation

8. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should design acceptable models for records management at headquarters, review existing arrangements with program branches and, where required, cooperate with them to implement corrective actions.

Operations of Ontario Region Records Offices

Finding # 5: **There are important weaknesses in the operations of the Records Offices in the Ontario Region.**

The audit assessed the operations of the Regional Records Office in the Ontario Regional Office and the Southern District in Brantford. In a region, it is the responsibility of the regional director general to implement the Departmental Records Management Program. The audit expected that the region would have a main Records Office, that this office would operate effectively, would set the direction for all records related issues and be regarded as the technical authority that provides leadership and guidance for records issues throughout the region. The same was expected at the district level.

The audit found weaknesses in the operation of Records Office in the Ontario Regional Office and, to a lesser extent, the Southern District Office. The regional office does not have the staff required to fully operate the records management program and the appropriate systems and procedures to manage records effectively and efficiently have not all been established. As a result, the records management program is not operating as a well managed function using good records practices across the regional office. This has created gaps in the regional records holdings. The district office has adequate staff but its operations need improvements.

Operations of Records Offices

To accomplish their roles and fulfil their responsibilities, the Records Offices need staff with the required skills and knowledge, that receive adequate training, are adequately supervised and have access to appropriate work tools and procedures. The audit found some weaknesses in these areas.

The audit noted a shortage of sufficiently skilled records management staff in the Records Office of the Ontario Regional Office. Not all records staff have received training in record keeping practices. The number of positions allocated to the records management function appears adequate. However, not all of the positions are staffed, and some are staffed with contract employees or employees on secondment. The lack of sufficiently skilled staff combined with vacant positions has impacted on regional records management ability to provide functional direction to program areas and districts. The Ontario Region's Records Manager position is vacant and the region has not been able to work out a suitable staffing solution. The situation has left the records staff with limited technical direction which is received from the Regional Manager of Administration who does not have the required level of technical expertise or experience expected of a Records Manager.

The Regional Records Office has goals and objectives for records management and some results are reported on internally. However, there is no performance measurement system in place. In the Southern district, there are no formal procedures for managing, controlling and monitoring workloads. There is no performance measurement system in use to measure and report on records management results.

Internally, the region issued separate procedures dealing with putting away records, processing incoming mail and disposing confidential waste. The latter procedure, *"Documents for Confidential Destruction"*, is no longer consistent with revised headquarters instructions. The Southern district issued desk procedures in 1992 and they were still in use at the time of the audit. This manual is technically sound and generally in line with the departmental records management policy.

The regional records management program has not been proactive in identifying user needs. Functional direction is provided when clients or users request assistance. Little functional direction is provided to the District Records Offices due to staff shortages and availability of relevant expertise. It was noted that regional records employees often do not possess sufficient expertise to carry out an "advisory" or service type of role. The absence of adequate functional guidance has impacted on the maintenance of the file classification system and on the management of records. It was noted, however, that the headquarters records program has not taken the lead on this issue, nor has it provided the regions with tools or functional advice that could lead to better service to users.

In order for the Records Offices to carry their work effectively and assume their leadership role, there is a need to strengthen their expertise and work procedures.

Recommendation

9. The Ontario Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Offices have adequate staff with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.

Management of Records Holdings

The audit assessed the management of the records sent to the records offices and under their direct control. It expected that the needs of users would be assessed, that records would be properly classified in accordance with the departmental classification system, put away regularly, adequately stored and protected, and readily accessible by users.

The audit found that problems exist with the management of records in the Records Offices visited. These problems relate to the identification of users needs, the classification system, the classification of documents, the control over records, including charged out files, and the protection of essential records.

Two programs were reviewed in the Ontario Region: Lands and Trusts Services and Funding Services. These programs rely almost exclusively on the Records Offices for their records needs. Staff are generally satisfied with the service they received. We did note, however, that the regional and district Records Offices do not systematically analyse the overall records needs nor the specific needs of records users. For example, record keeping systems have not been analysed to determine if the needs of users can be met in light of the changes being implemented in the region.

The corporate file classification system is in use in the region. The region has a responsibility to ensure that all regional records are incorporated into the classification system. However, not all regional records have been incorporated into the classification system. Problems exist with the system not meeting all regional needs. The region contends that the file classification system is structured around headquarter's needs. It cannot act independently to make changes to the system but must channel requests to the headquarters Records Office where responsibility lies for the system's development and maintenance. Regional staff acknowledge that it is necessary for headquarters to ensure uniformity of the classification system across all regions. However, they find the classification system confusing and consider that they have limited input into the system's revisions.

Knowing what records exist and where they are located and accessible is the foundation to effective records management and essential to decision-making and responding to requests for departmental information. The audit found that records are not all organized and classified to facilitate efficient retrieval and access by users. For example, the audit noted a significant collection of records, maintained by Lands and Trusts Services in Toronto, which was outside of the Records Office and the official records system. More than one hundred binders of copies of documents have been gathered over many years to support research on specific claims. These records are protected in a locked room outside of the Records Office. However, by not being part of the official records classification system, their long term storage, preservation and access to other users in the department could be impaired. In addition, some programs maintain their records outside the system. For example, originals of active "Minister's Guarantees" are kept by Funding Services in the regional office, and finance records are kept separately at the district level.

There are many regional documents which have been incorrectly classified and which cannot be retrieved through the corporate classification system. Two audit tests were carried out to test classification of documents. The first test asked records staff to find certain documents. In the Regional Office, three of the seven documents requested could not be found, most likely because they were misclassified. The second test reviewed a small sample of classified documents selected from Records Office shelves. In the auditors' opinion, four of the nine files selected contained incorrectly classified documents. Similar results were obtained at the district office.

Some types of records are not fully integrated into regional holdings. A prime example is that of E-mail message. The E-mail policy requires staff to send an electronic copy of their non-transitory E-mail messages to the Records Offices. The Records Offices have to first print and classify these messages before they can be put away. The success of this procedure was not fully assessed during the audit. However, given that this issue is not typical to this region, there is a need for regional records management to work with headquarters' records management to ensure that E-mail records are adequately managed.

At the regional office, the physical maintenance and office layout of the Records Office could be improved. At the time of the audit, some of the file shelves had become crowded and were out of order. The office layout was poor and the office was untidy. There were many boxes, files and paper left lying about unnecessarily, and records staff need additional shelving to process their work. Also, it was noted that some record keeping practices were not in line with the generally accepted practices in that field. At the district level, the records were generally well organized but some file shelves were overcrowded.

The regional and district Records Offices have problems with control over charged out files. Records are not adequately controlled when they are charged out to users and records which have been charged out for long periods are not recalled. Weak control over charged out files makes it difficult to maintain a complete set of records and retrieve them when needed.

The regional Records Office has not taken full advantage of technology to support its operations. The region is not using RIMS, the departmental automated records management system. Instead, it is using a combination of classification indexes (paper manuals) and history cards for retrieval. These instruments are labour intensive and make the retrieval of information difficult. However, program staff interviewed were generally satisfied with the reference service and the ability of Records Office to retrieve records.

The audit noted weaknesses over the control of essential records, those needed for operating the department in case of fire or other disaster, nor has it arranged for off-site storage. The region and the district have not identified all their essential records. However, the procedures and practices in the Records Office generally ensure that records stored in the Records Office are adequately protected to prevent unauthorized access. Also, for the most part, there is a proper segregation of policy documents from routine records.

With regard to disposal, the audit found that retention periods have been assigned only to records in paper format. Records in media other than paper are not covered. The Records Offices destroy records in their care in accordance with approved records retention schedules. However, some staff have raised concern over the retention period assigned to some records, especially for estates. In addition, the Records Office practice to move files to inactive storage only when the files are full has resulted in many files which have been inactive for years remaining in active storage. Archival and historical records in the Records Office are transferred to the National Archives.

The above mentioned weaknesses in the management of records impact on the ability of the Records Office to efficiently manage and retrieve documents or records when information is needed. When a document or a file cannot be retrieved, the credibility of the regional Records Office suffers and users are less inclined to trust the Records Office to manage their records.

Recommendation

10. The Ontario Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.

Awareness of Records Responsibilities and Good Practices

Finding #6: **Ontario Region staff are not always aware of their records management responsibilities, leading to inappropriate records keeping practices, risking the preservation of the corporate memory or unavailability of information when needed.**

The previous section discussed the importance of a strong regional centre for records management. This section deals with the essential contribution, and the roles and responsibilities, of regional employees in ensuring the good management of records.

An effective records program at the regional level requires the cooperation of the program areas. Without the support of the staff, regional records will not be incorporated into the departmental records classification system nor will the records be complete. The regional staff may also be involved in the classification, storage and protection of records.

Awareness of Records and Responsibilities

As already indicated, user awareness is an important tool in achieving effective records management in an organization. To fulfil their roles and responsibilities, employees need to be aware of them and how to carry them out. The audit found that employees in the Ontario Regional Office and the Southern District Office are not always aware of their records responsibilities. They are generally not aware of the records management policy and of certain key procedures, such as the rules governing records destruction. With regard to electronic information, employees are generally aware of the e-mail policy and their responsibility for managing non-transitory e-mails. But, as discussed earlier, there is no assurance that all e-mails are incorporated into the Official Records.

Records Management in the region does not conduct user awareness briefings to inform users of departmental record keeping requirements. General information on records management is provided to employees but there are no instructions on steps to be taken when a program is terminated or an office is closed. With the exception of issuing "*The Records Office Services Users Guide*" in 1993, however, the Regional Records Offices are not proactive in providing functional guidance to their records users.

Program staff may not be supporting the records program as they should because they may not have been adequately informed of the departmental record keeping requirements. Regional records management has a role to play in this regard. However, as noted earlier, regional records management employees are not sufficiently trained or experienced to perform this type of role.

Records Management Practices

Records holdings in the Ontario Region and Southern District Records Offices are not complete. As mentioned before, some records are retained outside of the corporate records system. Although there may be operational requirements to maintain records in a decentralized manner, there should be assurance that the records are all accounted for in the records system, managed according to departmental record-keeping practices and are properly stored, protected and disposed of. There is no assurance that these programs follow good record keeping practices. In some cases, records are maintained by employees. For example, with the departure of many employees, a number of records were turned to Records Office in the Regional Office. These records were not adequately maintained and there is a need for the Records Office to classify and integrate them into the records holdings.

Recommendation

11. The Ontario Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the Records Office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.

Operations of the Manitoba Region Records Office

Finding # 7: **There are important weaknesses in the operations of the Records Office in the Manitoba Region.**

The audit assessed the operations of the regional central records in the Manitoba Regional Office. In a region, it is the responsibility of the regional director general to implement the departmental records management program. The audit expected that the region would have a main records office, that this office would operate effectively, would set the direction for all records related issues and be regarded as the technical authority that provides leadership and guidance for records issues throughout the Regional Office.

The audit found weaknesses in the operation of records office in the Manitoba Region. The office does not have the staff required to fully operate the records management program and the appropriate systems and procedures to manage records effectively and efficiently have not all been established. As a result, the records management program is not operating as a well managed function using good records practices across the Regional Office. This has created gaps in the regional records holdings.

Operations of Regional Records Offices

To accomplish its roles and fulfil its responsibilities, the Regional Records Office needs staff with the required skills and knowledge, that receive adequate training, are adequately supervised and have access to appropriate work tools and procedures. The audit found some weaknesses in these areas.

The audit noted a shortage of sufficiently skilled records management staff in the Manitoba Regional Records Office. The number of positions allocated to the records management function appears adequate. Some of these staff, however, are also assigned duties outside records management. Not all records staff have received training in record keeping practices. The lack of sufficiently skilled staff has impacted on regional ability to manage records and provide functional direction to program areas. At the time of the audit, the region had a project underway to review the human, financial and material resources allocated to records management activities.

The Records Office has not implemented work procedures which would ensure that employees work is fully productive. There are no procedures manuals, and no systems for monitoring and controlling work loads within the records office. The office has not established annual plans, goals and objectives for the records management program. Results are not measured and reported on.

The Regional Central Records has not been proactive in identifying user needs. Functional direction is provided when clients or users request assistance. It was noted that regional records employees often do not possess sufficient expertise to carry out an "advisory" or service type of role. Little information on records management is provided to employees. With the exception of issuing users records manuals or guides, the regional records office is not proactive in providing functional guidance to their records users. It was also noted that the headquarters records program has not provided the regions with tools or functional advice on this issue.

In order for the regional records office to carry its work effectively and assume its leadership role, there is a need to strengthen its organization in terms of expertise, planning and work procedures.

Recommendation

12. The Manitoba Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.

Management of Records Holdings

The audit assessed the management of the records sent to the records office and under its direct control. It expected that the needs of users would be assessed, that records would be properly classified in accordance with the departmental classification system, put away regularly, adequately stored and protected, and readily accessible by users.

The audit found that problems exist with the management of records in Regional Records Office. These problems relate to the identification of users needs, the classification system, the classification of documents, the control over records, including charged out files, and the protection of essential records.

The Regional Records Office does not systematically analyse the overall needs of the region with regard to records and the needs of records users. For example, record keeping systems have not been analysed to determine if the needs of users can be met in light of the changes being implemented in the region. The corporate file classification system is in use in the region. The region has a responsibility to ensure that all regional records are incorporated into the classification system. However, not all regional records have been incorporated into the classification system. Problems exist with the system not meeting all regional needs. The region contends that the file classification system is structured around headquarter's needs and that regional file subjects have to be "force fitted" into the system. The region cannot act independently to make changes to the system but must channel requests to the headquarters Records Office where responsibility lies for the system's development and maintenance.

The region acknowledges that it is necessary for headquarters to ensure uniformity of the classification system across all regions, but it is felt that headquarters could respond more promptly to requests for new file classification numbers. Regional records staff also said they find the classification system confusing and they only have limited input into the system's revisions.

Knowing what records exist and where they are located and accessible is the foundation to effective records management and essential to decision-making and responding to requests for departmental information. The audit found that records are not all organized and classified to facilitate efficient retrieval and access by users. There are many regional documents which have been incorrectly classified and which cannot be retrieved through the corporate classification system. Two audit tests were carried out to test classification of documents. The first test asked records staff to find certain documents. Three of the seven documents requested could not be found, most likely because they were misclassified. The second test reviewed a small sample of classified documents selected from records office shelves. In the auditors' opinion, six of the thirteen files selected contained incorrectly classified documents. In addition, some programs maintain their records outside the system. The Lands and Trust Services program and Funding Services program are in this situation. In some cases, originals are sent to the Records Office, in other instances, the programs keep the originals.

Other records are not fully integrated into regional holdings. At the time of the audit, there were approximately 11 linear feet of unorganised records originating from Capital Services dating from 1988 as well as several boxes and approximately 24 linear feet of other unorganised records some originating from Economic Development awaiting classifying and filing. There were also a number of boxes (about 35 linear feet) of Funding Services records awaiting transfer to the records office. In addition, the records office had not fully integrated e-mail records. The Manitoba Region e-mail policy requires staff to send an electronic copy of their non-transitory e-mail messages to the records office. The records office has to first print and classify these e-mails before they can be put away. At the time of the audit, four linear feet of e-mails messages had accumulated and awaited classification and filing. This issue is not typical to this region, however. There is a need for regional records management to work with headquarters records management on the e-mail issue to ensure that these records are adequately managed.

The Regional Records Office also has problems with control over charged out files. Records are not adequately controlled when they are charged out to users and records which have been charged out for long periods are not recalled. Weak control over charged out files makes it difficult to retrieve them. An audit test in the region confirmed this fact. Two out of four files selected could not be retrieved.

The Regional Records Office has not taken full advantage of technology to support its operations. The region is not using RIMS, the departmental automated records management system. Instead, it is using a combination of classification indexes (paper manuals) and history cards for retrieval.

Inadequate retrieval aids and the misclassification of documents often makes it difficult to find information. It was noted that when the region envisaged the implementation of RIMS, it had to turn to other regions which have implemented it to obtain advice and assistance. Headquarters records was of little help in implementing the system.

The audit noted weaknesses over the control of essential records The region has not identified all its essential records, those needed for operating the department in case of fire or other disaster, nor has it arranged for off-site storage. However, for the most part, there is a proper segregation of policy documents from routine records. The procedures and practices in the records office generally ensure that records stored in the records office are adequately protected to prevent unauthorized access. However, the records office practice to move files to inactive storage only when the files are full has resulted in many files which have been inactive for years remaining in active storage.

With regard to disposal, the audit found that retention periods have been assigned to records in paper format, with the exception of Band Employee Benefits records. Records in media other than paper are not covered. The Records Office destroys records in its care in accordance with approved records retention schedules. However, in one audit test, it was found that an original record has been mistakenly identified to be shredded. Archival and historical records in the Records Office are transferred to the National Archives.

The above mentioned weaknesses in the management of records impacts on the ability of the records office to efficiently manage and retrieve documents or records when information is needed. When a document or a file cannot be retrieved, or is inadvertently destroyed, the credibility of the regional records office suffers and users are less inclined to trust the records office to manage their records.

Recommendation

13. The Manitoba Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.

Awareness of Records Responsibilities and Good Practices

Finding #8: **Manitoba regional staff are not always aware of their records management responsibilities, leading to inappropriate records keeping practices, risking the preservation of the corporate memory or unavailability of information when needed.**

The previous section discussed the importance of a strong regional centre for records management. This section deals with the essential contribution, and the roles and responsibilities, of regional employees in ensuring the good management of records.

An effective records program at the regional level requires the cooperation of the program areas. Without the support of the staff, regional records will not be incorporated into the departmental records classification system nor will the records be complete. The regional staff may also be involved in the classification, storage and protection of records.

Awareness of Records and Responsibilities

As indicated earlier, user awareness is an important tool in achieving effective records management in an organization. To fulfil their roles and responsibilities, employees need to be aware of them and how to carry them out. The audit found that employees in Manitoba Regional Office are not always aware of their records responsibilities. The region has produced a "Records Management Handbook" intended for program staff in the region. The handbook's procedures are generally in line with departmental records keeping practices. In the last few years, however, it was distributed only to new employees. Recently, the handbook has ceased to be distributed altogether. Records management in the region does not conduct user awareness briefings to inform users of departmental record keeping requirements. Employees are generally aware of the e-mail policy and their responsibility for managing non-transitory e-mails. However, there is no assurance that all e-mails are incorporated into the official records, even though the region has implemented some techniques to promote the forwarding of non-transitory e-mails to the Records Office.

Program staff may not be supporting the records program as they should because they may not have been adequately informed of the departmental record keeping requirements, including the classification system. Regional records management has a role to play in this regard. However, as noted earlier, regional records management employees are not sufficiently trained or experienced to perform this type of role.

Records Management Practices

Records holdings in the Manitoba Records Office are not complete. For example, the Land and Trust Services and the Funding Services Directorates' records are retained outside of the corporate records system. There are no agreements in place between the Records Office and these program areas. Although there may be operational requirements to maintain records in a decentralized manner, there should be assurance that the records are all accounted for in the records system, managed according to departmental record-keeping practices and are properly stored, protected and disposed of. There is no assurance that these programs follow good record keeping practices.

For example, these programs only send copies of records to the records office instead of sending the originals. An audit test confirmed this practice and revealed in one instance that the records office had a "copy" of the audit review committee's report of a band's audit report which was unsigned and, therefore, not official. The original signed audit report, along with the review notes and comments, was maintained on the file kept in Funding Services. The problem is that under regional practices, the files kept by the records office will be maintained as the "official" file and the file kept within Funding Services, or the "working file", will be destroyed. This situation potentially leads to the destruction of original information.

Recommendation

14. The Manitoba Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.

Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Audit of Information Management

Background:

Information management is concerned with the fact that information is a valuable resource that must be managed so that it can be used. The management of information can be observed from a life cycle perspective which incorporates five phases: planning; collection; organization and use; storage, protection and retention; and finally disposition. In recent years, largely as a reflection of the changes in the information technology, the traditional function of records management has evolved into the broader concept of "management of information holdings".

The government-wide policy applicable to this field is the Treasury Board's Policy on Management of Government Information Holdings (MGIH), issued in October 1989 and revised in July 1994. As defined in the policy, a department's information holdings "include all information under the control of a government institution, regardless of physical mode or medium in which such information may be stored". Excluded from the definition are materials held by federal libraries which were not prepared or produced by or for the government.

The responsibility for the management of DIAND's information holdings is a shared responsibility. Implementation of and compliance with the "Management of Government of Information Holdings" Policy has been assigned to the Director General, Information Management in the Corporate Services Sector. As well the Information Management Branch provides information systems and supporting infrastructures to assist in the management of the department's information holdings. The Administration Directorate manages the department's manual information holdings (this includes both Central Records and the Library). Central Records uses the Recorded Information Management System to keep track of its information holdings. In addition, all departmental managers and employees are responsible to ensure that information holdings under their control are managed in accordance with MGIH policy.

Need:

There are several challenges facing the department with respect to the management of its information holdings. There are concerns that the responsibility could be clarified and better coordinated. The field of electronic information is constantly changing, notably in the variety of technologies for the storage and retrieval of records and information.

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There are also indications that manual and electronic information holdings remain to be integrated. These challenges all impact on the department's ability to access and use information.

Treasury Board's MGIH policy requires periodic assessment by internal audit of management of information holdings. The need for an Audit of Records Management was identified and approved by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee (DAEC) as part of the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) 1996-1997 Plan.

Scope:

The audit will include an examination of the systems and procedures in place for: planning, directing, organizing and controlling; the transmission, maintenance and protection; and the dissemination and use of the department's information holdings throughout their life cycle. The audit will include an examination of the systems and procedures for the preservation, retention and disposition of the department's information holdings. The audit will also consider opportunities for re-engineering.

Issues:

The purpose of this audit will be to assess the extent of compliance with government, Departmental and Treasury Board policies and direction. The main objective of the audit will be to verify whether the department plans, directs, organizes and controls its information holdings throughout their life cycle, regardless of the form or medium in which the information is held. More specifically, whether:

- the department assures that information holdings are available to ensure continuity in the management of the department;
- the department maintains an identification or classification system that provides an effective means for organizing, storing, locating and using information, and that records of enduring value are maintained and scheduled for retention and disposition;
- departmental practices are consistent with applicable government standards for the transmission, maintenance and protection of information holdings;
- improvements could be made in the management of information holdings.

Approach:

The Treasury Board's Guide to be the Review of the Management of Government Information Holdings will be used throughout the audit. The approach for this audit will adhere to DAEB's standards for conducting audits. The planning phase will focus on describing the systems in place for classifying, organizing, locating and disposing of information as well

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as further defining the issues warranting further examination in the fieldwork phase. In addition, similar audits or reviews carried out in other departments will be used to assess best practices and lessons learned.

Data will be collected mostly through interviews and files and systems reviews from various responsibility centres included in the audit. The fieldwork will be conducted at headquarters and in the Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta Regional Offices.

The audit will also make use of an advisory group of officials from the Management Information Branch and the Administration Directorate in order to help direct the audit and to ensure that no duplication occurs with their Review of the MGIH Policy. Other interested parties, notably users, may be invited to participate in the advisory group in order to ensure that their concerns are addressed during the audit.

Resources: The audit will be performed using both DAEB and contracted resources. Overall management of the audit will be the responsibility of DAEB.

Time frame: The audit will begin in November 1996. A final report should be issued in June 1997.

Cost: A budget of $80,000 has been established for consulting work.

Approved:

Brent DiBartolo
Assistant Deputy Minister
Corporate Services
October 21, 1996

Action Plan

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Corporate Services

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
1. The Director General of the Information Management Branch should update the record management framework, in light of the development in the field of records management and of the changing role of the department and, in cooperation with Regional Directors General, ensure the implementation of this framework across the department.	7	An Information Management Accountability Framework is being developed which will address the management of all information in the department, regardless of media. A policy on the Management of Recorded Information will be developed to replace the outdated Records Management Directive 5.21. The policy will be communicated to all departmental employees.	Manager, National Records Policy and Systems Section (NRPSS) Manager, NRPSS	Completed March 31, 1999
2. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that staff are assigned to records management responsibilities and that they have the required skills to support the updated management framework.	8	The required skills and knowledge of records management staff will be improved with the development of appropriate training seminars and awareness sessions. There will be initial training offered for both headquarters and regions during June and December 1998/February 1999, and an ongoing training program will be developed to begin in 1999.	Manager, NRPSS	June 30, 1998 completed March 31, 1999
3. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that the Records Offices have adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	10	Adequate and properly trained staff will be assigned to the Records Offices. Work tools and procedures for planning, controlling and monitoring the work of records offices will be developed.	Director, CIMD Manager, NRPSS Manager, Corporate Records	March 31, 1999 June 30, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Corporate Services

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
4. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that the records classification system is revised, in consultation with regions, with a view to ensure that it contains all records, regardless of their format, and to simplify it when feasible.	11	The current departmental file classification system is being reviewed in an effort to simplify it, with the requirement that the revised classification system fully maximises the subject matter of the department. A common classification system for regions and headquarters sectors, which is end user oriented, is being developed in close consultation with regions and headquarters sectors.	Manager, NRPSS	March 31, 1999
		A departmental inventory of paper-based and electronic records will be conducted to ascertain which records holdings are controlled and which are not incorporated in the departmental file classification system.	Manager, NRPSS Manager, Corporate Records	April 30, 1999
		All records, including electronic records, will be linked and described in the departmental file classification system.	Manager, NRPSS	June 30, 1999
		Assistance will be provided to programs in analysing their records needs and in setting up records systems in support of departmental priorities and program delivery.	Manager, NRPSS	June 30, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Corporate Services

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
5. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records.	13	The classification process will be improved through appropriate monitoring of previous documents classified and increased training when required.	Manager, Corporate Records	March 31, 1999
		A Recorded Information Management System (RIMS) is being implemented as the department's automated records management system. Headquarters and five regional records management offices are currently using RIMS on a limited basis to manage their paper information. In fiscal year 1998-99 RIMS will be implemented to its full potential in all regions and headquarters records management offices. The implementation is presently in progress throughout DIAND with technical staffs who have full knowledge of informatics.	Manager, Corporate Records	March 31, 1999
		An inventory will be conducted on departmental records maintained in records offices to ensure that dormant or inactive records are not maintained in prime office space. All dormant records will be transferred to a dormant storage area and appropriate retention and disposal schedules will be applied.	Manager, Corporate Records	April 30, 1999
		Procedures and guidelines will be developed for all records not physically controlled by the records offices including those which are considered essential records. Program officials and the Security Section will be advised appropriately.	Manager, NRPSS	May 31, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Corporate Services

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
6. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should revise the retention period assigned to some records and, in cooperation with programs, ensure the prompt disposal of records that are beyond their retention period.	14	The scheduling and disposition of records will be reviewed to ensure that all records including those in electronic format are properly scheduled. Retention periods will reflect the information's operational, fiscal and legal values. The review will also address the prompt disposal of records that are still being maintained beyond their established retention period. Departmental Schedule updated as per MYDP which is ongoing. Awareness sessions, in conjunction with the activities for recommendation #7, will be developed to assist program officials to assume their role in determining appropriate retention periods on the disposition of program records and the benefits derived therein.	(Schedule Preparation) Manager, NRPSS (Implementation) Manager, Corporate Records (Develop Session) Manager, NRPSS (Conduct Session) Manager, Corporate Records	 Ongoing March 31, 1999 April / May 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Corporate Services

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
7. The Director General of the Information Management Branch should assess the degree of records management awareness among employees and implement mechanisms to increase awareness of critical aspects of records management or of those that are the least understood.	16	User awareness sessions for departmental employees will be developed and conducted throughout DIAND. Emphasis will be placed on the appropriate management of all information, including electronic documents such as E-mail and the Internet. The definition of a record from a departmental or government perspective will be defined and explained.	(Develop Session) Manager, NRPSS	March 31, 1999
			(Conduct Session) Manager, Corporate Records	April / May 1999
		An interim strategy to capture E-mails is being developed pending the implementation of a Comprehensive Integrated Document Management System (CDIMS).	Manager, Corporate Records	March 31, 1999
		Implement the interim strategy of managing corporate E-mails records which are corporate in nature, and communicate this policy to all employees throughout the department.	Manager, NRPSS	June 30, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **Corporate Services**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
8. The Director of the Corporate Information Management Directorate should design acceptable models for records management at headquarters, review existing arrangements with program branches and, where required, cooperate with them to implement corrective actions.	19	Guidelines and procedures on the management of decentralized records will be developed for all records not physically controlled by Records Management. We will ensure that these records are included within the departmental file classification system and managed according to departmental record keeping practices and standards. This process will foster the preservation of the corporate memory and enable the department to have accurate knowledge on the location of all departmental records and have access to these records when needed. In response to "cleaning days" consultation will be undertaken with Administrative Services Directorate relative to their annual letter submitted to departmental employees on this topic. Emphasis will be made on informing employees that this process should not involve the elimination and transfer of original corporate records to the records management office and general records management guidelines in support of cleaning days will be provided to employees. Such records may be lost or destroyed in a large collection of unorganized documents. Procedures and guidelines will be developed on the appropriate process to follow when programs have decided to transfer numerous corporate records to the Records Management Office. Also, the definition of what constitutes a "corporate record" will be fully explained.	(Develop Policy) Manager, NRPSS (Implement Policy) Manager, Corporate Records (Follow-up and provide direction to headquarters and regions) Manager, Corporate Records (Develop Policy) Manager, NRPSS	May 30, 1999 Ongoing through 1999 October 31, 1998 May 30, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **Alberta Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	The region has dedicated the appropriate resources to the records functions. However, we acknowledge that there is a need to better train the existing staff complement on good records management practices. Three of the five records staff will have received records management / classification training by October 30, 1998. The remaining 2 staff members will receive the training when it is offered again next year. Work processes and procedures will be affected by the results of the review noted below (#14).	Regional Director General	Ongoing Trainging to be completed by: October 31, 1999 Refer to #14 about review.
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	The region has the necessary tools, systems (RIMS) and procedures in place to manage record holdings, although the review noted below (#14) will have some impact in this area. The determination of what is essential is the responsibility of the Treasury Board. The region follows the established guidelines.	Regional Director General	Completed Refer to #14 about review.
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	As noted above (#12), the region acknowledges that training is required for the regional records staff. Preliminary work on a 1997 review of the region's records management identified several concerns of users and records staff that need to be resolved. The regional review by DAEB should be completed before further action is taken.	Regional Director General	See #12 above about training. Completion of review depends on DAEB.

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Atlantic Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	The Atlantic Region has recently staffed two CR 4 positions in Records, on an indeterminate basis. Basic Records Training will be provided during September 1998. Work processes and procedures will be revamped in consultation with headquarter.	Regional Director General	September 30, 1999
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	The Atlantic Region will install and have RIMS fully operational during the fall of 1998.	Regional Director General	March 31, 1999
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	The Atlantic Region will make arrangements with each directorate and provide briefings on Records Management Responsibilities and RIMS Operations.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : British Columbia Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	Senior Management of British Columbia Region has recently approved the reorganization of the Records Office to reflect the new realities of records management. The amalgamation of some duties coupled with higher classification should stabilize the organization by retaining qualified staff. The reorganization was based on the premise of existing operational requirements. Given the expectation for increasing level of basic service and the project implementation such as of PC Docs, and letters of allegations additional support is required. This is a national issue and should be discussed at a Senior Management level. Operational procedures are in effect. These procedures are found on the Intranet for quick reference. As well, there is an ongoing cross training program in place to ensure that there are backups to every position in the Records Office.	Regional Director General	September 30, 1998

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **British Columbia Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	The Recorded Information Management System (RIMS) has been fully implemented in the Records Office as well as selected user groups preparatory to a rollout to all staff in the region. There is an ongoing Retention and Disposal Program in effect. Dormant files are regularly sent to the National Archives Records Centre for storage. In regards to the management of essential records British Columbia Region is awaiting the procedures and guidelines from headquarters pertaining to essential records.	Regional Director General	June 30, 1999
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	British Columbia Region has an ongoing orientation program to the Records Office for new employees joining the department. In conjunction, we will be initiating an user awareness sessions to all staff when headquarters develop an action plan outlining the employees' roles and responsibilities in complying with proper records management procedures. To ensure that all employees comply with the procedures it is recommended that a letter signed by the Deputy Minister be communicated to all staff outlining their records management responsibilities.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **Manitoba Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	Records Office employees received Records Management training in June 1998. Headquarters is developing further training that will be provided upon completion. We are currently developing and staffing RIMS personnel in order to automate the Records area. Headquarters is currently updating procedure manuals for distribution to all regions.	Regional Director Corporate Services	March 31, 1999 The region will have procedures in place and will be well under way with RIMS implementation
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	The Records Information Management System is being implemented within the Manitoba Region. Procedures and guidelines once developed by headquarters with respect to records not physically controlled by the Records Office including those which are considered essential records, will be instituted within the region.	Regional Director Corporate Services	December 31, 1999 The Region will have entered all information into RIMS. With respect to procedures and guidelines, this will depend on headquarters.
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	Part of the conversion to RIMS requires that we research all programs with respect to documentation they are holding, and making them aware of our policies, guidelines, and records practices in the region.	Regional Director Corporate Services	December 31, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : NWT Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	The NWT Region is working with headquarters to improve the required skills and knowledge of its Records Management staff. Appropriate training seminars and awareness sessions will be offered December 1998 and February 1999 with an ongoing training program to begin in the 1999-2000 fiscal year. Adequate and properly trained staff will be assigned, where resource availability permits, in support of the various audit recommendations. Work tools and procedures for planning, managing, and monitoring work of our Records Office will be developed.	Director of Corporate Services	March 31, 2000

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **NWT Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	The NWT Region will improve its record classification system through training and assessing present methods for storing and retrieving document records. A Records Information Management System (RIMS) is being implemented in the NWT Region, commencing Phase 1 in September 1998. Subject to resources being allocated, this automated records system will ensure appropriate tools, systems and procedures are in place to retrieve, store and dispose of essential records. Procedures and guidelines will be developed for records not physically maintained and controlled by the Records Office. Program officials and the Security Section will be advised appropriately. The scheduling and disposition will be reviewed to ensure records in an electronic format are properly scheduled. Retention periods will reflect the information's operational, fiscal and legal values. Attention will be paid to prompt disposal of records maintained beyond their established retention period. Awareness sessions will be developed to assist program officials to assume their role in determining retention period on the disposal of program records, subject to resourcing availability.	Director of Corporate Services	March 31, 2000

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **NWT Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	The NWT Region will conduct user awareness sessions for its staff. Emphasis in these sessions will be placed on the management of information including electronic documents, such as e-mail and the Internet. The definitions of a record from a departmental of government perspective will be defined and explained.	Director of Corporate Services	March 31, 2000

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Ontario Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
9. The Ontario Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Offices have adequate staff with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	21	The training plan for records staff will be adhered to and efforts will be made to have records staff participate in departmental training courses at headquarters.	Regional Director General	March 31, 1999
10. The Ontario Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	24	Additional space has been provided in the Toronto Regional Office, reducing the over-crowding and, with the implementation of ROP Records Offices in the former District Offices have now been closed. Also, training will be provided to appropriate Records Office staff in the implementation of RIMS.	Regional Director General	Completed April 1, 1998 March 31, 1999
11. The Ontario Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the Records Office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	25	A review of files maintained outside the Records Office will be completed to determine if the location of those files is appropriate. Regional employees will be reminded of their records management responsibilities.	Regional Director General	March 31, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Quebec Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the records office has sufficient staff with the necessary skills and that effective work methods are implemented.	27	The Quebec Region has the appropriate tools, record information management system (RIMS) and computer equipment to provide adequate service. Even after cutting one position as a result of the Resourcing Our Priorities (ROP) exercise, there are enough clerks. However, we must criticize a certain lack of internal capacity as regards coding and destruction due to a larger turnover in staff. Work relations problems are also preventing us, at the moment, from modifying service delivery. The supervisor has the necessary skills to advise the users. This duty will be extended to the other employees in the section. Redefine the tasks and staff positions while ensuring versatility among the three assigned records clerks.	Regional Director General	March 31, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **Quebec Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that the tools, systems and procedures are in place for the effective and efficient management of record holdings, including essential records and the appropriate elimination of records.	29	The Quebec Region has been using the automated record information management system (RIMS) since June 1996. At the same time, the old fiche system is still used for old files. This creates a much larger workload, but the Region is using temporary contract help to deal with the surplus. The sector keeps a very accurate list of the dormant files stored in the basement and the Quebec City Federal Records Centre (National Archives). We have noted, however, that the list of pre-1985 files stored in the Records Centre (National Archives) is not very detailed It lists the archives boxes, but not the contents. It would take three months and cost $25,000 to complete the list of records stored in the Quebec City Federal Records Centre (National Archives). We are awaiting confirmation of budget availability for this purpose from headquarters. Obtain the necessary budget and carry out the project.	Regional Director General	March 31, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Quebec Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their responsibilities with respect to records management and that the existing arrangements between the records office and the programs conform to good records management practices.	31	Since June 1997, a record clean-up project, which involves coding and filing records and making DIAND staff aware of the department's use of records management. Two archives specialists have been hired for the project and will meet with all employees in order to restructure their personal files. The assigned records supervisor sends all staff information by E-mail on an irregular basis. The project proceeds as funds are available. The current records clean-up program will not be completed during this phase. A third phase will thus be necessary. Obtain the necessary budget from the DIAND branches involved and carry out the project.	Regional Director General	October 31, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **Saskatchewan Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	The Saskatchewan Region has an adequate number of staff with the increase of one employee in November 1997. All staff will be provided with training developed by Corporate Information Management Directorate, headquarters. This will ensure all employees have adequate skills and a consistency in the application of processes and procedures in the region and between regions.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1998
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	The Recorded Information Management System (RIMS) is being implemented as the department's automated records management system to manage the paper information. The installation of RIMS and training of staff will occur during the week of September 21, 1998. The current file classification system has been revised with input from all regions and headquarters and will be more efficient for the employees to use. The Regional Records Office has an ongoing project to centralize all records held by staff into the Records Management System. Because of the limited space available in the Records Office, the retention and disposable schedule of the records have been adhered to and records disposed of according to policy.	Regional Director General	September 30, 1998 November 30, 1998 November 30, 1999

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Audit of Information Management - Records

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : Saskatchewan Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	The staff of the Records Office works with the programs on an ongoing basis to discuss procedures and to ensure compliance to policy. As each new initiative is being introduced, (RIMS, new file classification system procedures for retention of e-mail) training and awareness sessions will be provided to all employees.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VERIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET : 96/05A

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : **Audit of Information Management - Records**

REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE : **Yukon Region**

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PREVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
12. The Regional Director General should ensure that the Records Office has adequate staff, with the required skills, and that effective work processes and procedures are in place.	27	Yukon Region does not maintain a Central Records Office. Each Responsibility Centre Manager maintains their own records. Adequate staff are in place to manage the records function. Effective work processes and procedures are in place.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1998
13. The Regional Director General should ensure that tools, systems and procedures are in place to manage records holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records.	29	All tools, systems and procedures to manage record holdings efficiently and effectively, including essential records and the proper disposition of records, are in place.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1998
14. The Regional Director General should ensure that regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities, and that existing arrangements between the records office and programs are consistent with good records management practices.	31	Regional employees are aware of their records management responsibilities. Continuous training is provided to program areas. Special events are held to maintain an awareness of good records management practices.	Regional Director General	November 30, 1998